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Memorandum

To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Tourism & Culture Subcommittee Chair David Rosenwasser

Re: June & July 2004 meetings

Date: July 30, 2004

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Tourism & Culture Subcommittee met June 14, 2004 at the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation, and July 12, 2004 at the UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth. Present for the June meeting were subcommittee members Rosenwasser, Casale, Cusack, Geiger, Lawson, and Virtuoso, as well as ENRP Member Anello, and additional representatives from the NTCC and BNCVB. Present for the July meeting were subcommittee members Rosenwasser, Brown, Cerza, Cusack, Geiger (proxy), Lawson, and Praetzel, as well as Anne Conable and Michelle Holbrook from the BNCVB Cultural Tourism Committee.

Cultural Tourism Directional Signage:

The City of Buffalo requested an outside engineer for confirmation of sign placement in order to defray some of their in-kind costs for the project. Erie County has graciously agreed to provide said engineer. The caveat is that we will need the standards in writing from the city for the county engineer to use. In the meantime, an effort being facilitated by the USA Niagara Development Corporation is pursuing signage for Niagara Falls. We will be communicating with each other to achieve a completed project in the core city of each county.

Tourist Transportation:

The subcommittee met with representatives of the Buffalo-Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau Cultural Tourism Committee on this project. While tourist transportation remains on their agenda as an ongoing project, many in the room questioned whether we have done the proper market research to determine the need for such a project. While research was done prior to the past pilot,

there is no current research. To that end, a pilot centered on the National Buffalo Wing Festival will be created to provide free shuttle service to Niagara Falls. The NTCC will provide the service, and the Festival will advertise the service. Students will be present to conduct a survey as well, with the goal of determining the need (or lack thereof) for an ongoing shuttle.

Discussion also turned to ways to ease travel for those who drive to the region. Things like a multi-lot parking pass were discussed. The subcommittee will continue to work on this related issue.

Front Line Training:

At the May 21 general meeting, the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee received concept approval to develop a forum with a cross section of properties to find out what they need to better implement front line training for tourism. As a first step, the June 14 subcommittee meeting was devoted to learning of the present front line training efforts of the NTCC and BNCVB. It was learned that both agencies have begun jointly visiting properties in the past year. Fifty properties have been visited, although some major properties in Niagara Falls remain a challenge. Locally owned properties are also sometimes difficult to reach. Culturals are afforded the opportunity to be guest speakers at these sessions, but few have taken advantage of the offer. As a result of the very good work undertaken in the past year, **the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee withdraws its request for a forum and instead seeks approval to work with the Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County, the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation and the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau toward the goal of encouraging the cultural community to act as guest speakers at front line training sessions.**

Culture Development Area Legislation:

This is the legislation formerly known as "culture zones." The subcommittee continues to track this legislation's progress through the legislative committee system, and continues to examine how ENRP can help support and/or implement the area in our region should it be approved.

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed include the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative and the need to reconnect it to the cultural community upon release of the final plan.